

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAPE T 00594 271125Z
ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T CAPE TOWN 594

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: BOTHA-KISSINGER CONVERSATION

REF: STATE 77668,

1. BOTHA'S REMARK TO KISSINGER, WITHOUT KNOWING MORE ABOUT
CONTEXT IN WHICH IT WAS MADE, COULD REPRESENT ANYTHING FROM A
PRESSURE TACTIC TO SPEED UP COMPLETION AND PRESENTATION OF THE
PROPOSALS TO UNVEILING OF A DETAILED PLAN TO PROCEED WITH AN
INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

2. GIVEN THE FOUR FACTORS BELOW I AM INCLINED TO THINK
THE REMARK WAS AT THAT POINT (MARCH 21) MORE OF A PRESSURE TACTIC:

A) BOTHA'S PENCHANT FOR OVERSTATEMENT;

B) THE GROWING IMPATIENCE VORSTER AND OTHERS OVER THE DELAY IN
COMPLETION OF THE PROPOSALS, AN IMPATIENCE AGGRAVATED BY THE
CONTROVERSY BETWEEN WHITE FACTIONS IN NAMIBIA FOR WHICH BOTHA
IS TAKING THE HEAT;

C) THE CAUTION WITH WHICH THE PRUDENT BRAND FOURIE HAS
ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF NEXT STEPS, LIMITING HIMSELF TO STATEMENTS
ABOUT THE NEED TO SPECIFY A "TARGET DATE" FOR ELECTIONS DURING
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THE UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE WHILE FIVE-POWER TALKS
CONTINUE; AND

D) MOST IMPORTANT, SAG STRATEGY CALLS FOR MANEUVERING SO AS TO
PLACE MAXIMUM RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE ON SWAPO; HENCE VORSTER
IS UNLIKELY TO ANNOUNCE A SERIES OF UNILATERAL STEPS UNTIL THE
PROPOSALS ARE OUT IN THE OPEN AND SWAPO HAS HAD A CHANCE TO

REACT, HOPEFULLY, FROM A SAG STANDPOINT, NEGATIVELY SO THAT UNILATERAL ACTION BECOMES MORE PLAUSIBLE.

3. THE TEN DAYS MENTIONED BY BOTHA TO KISSINGER PUTS THE TIME FRAME FOR AN ANNOUNCEMENT DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE BUDGET AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE PRIME MINISTER'S BUDGET. THIS WOULD BE A LOGICAL OCCASION BUT I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE, COMING SO CLOSE ON THE HEELS OF THE SCHEDULED PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS (MARCH 30), THAT THE SAG WILL WAIT TO STUDY THEM CAREFULLY AND WATCH FOR SWAPO REACTION BEFORE DECIDING ON THEIR NEXT MOVE.

4. IF THE PROPOSALS ARE JUDGED TO BE AS UNACCEPTABLE AS BRAND FOURIE INDICATED TO ME TEN DAYS AGO AND SWAPO REACTION IS RIGHT (FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN STANDPOINT), IT IS QUITE CONCEIVABLE THAT VORSTER WILL DECIDE TO GO IT ALONE. IN DOING SO HE IS LIKELY TO ADHERE AS CLOSELY AS HE CAN TO THE FIVE-POWER PROPOSALS. IN ANNOUNCING A DATE FOR ELECTIONS HE WILL SAY THAT IT WILL BE ON THE BASIS OF ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE, NATIONAL (NOT ETHNIC) IN SCOPE, AND FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO DECIDE ON THE FUTURE CONSTITUTION. I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE INVITED THE UN TO SEND OBSERVERS, OR AT LEAST REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIVE POWERS, SELECTED OTHER COUNTRIES, THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, ETC. HE WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT SWAPO IS FREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS IF THEY WISH TO DO SO PEACEFULLY.

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5. I DOUBT VERY MUCH WHETHER ADMONITIONS FROM US OR THE OTHER FOUR POWERS WOULD HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON VORSTER UNLESS WE WERE TO CONFRONT HIM WITH A CHOICE OF ACCEPTING THE PROPOSALS OR AT LEAST CONTINUING THE DISCUSSIONS ON THE ONE HAND OR FACING FIVE POWER SUUUPRT FOR SANCTIONS ON THE OTHER. THE OTHER DETTERENT, OF COURSE, IS FOR SWAPO TO INDICATE ITS ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS. VORSTER WOULD THEN EITHER HAVE TO FALL INTO LINE OR DEFY THE WORLD.

6. I RECOMMEND THAT WE PREPARE ON A STANDBY BASIS WITH THE BRITISH A CARTER-CALLAGHAN LETTER (COULD BE EXPANDED TO THE FIVE) TO VORSTER STRESSING (A) THE JOINT EFFORT WHICH HAS GONE INTO FINDING A SOLUTION THAT WOULD BRING PEACE AND STABILITY TO THE AREA; (B) THE STATES INVOLVED IN CONTINUING THAT EFFORT UNTIL ALL AVENUES ARE EXPLORED; AND (C) THE CONSEQUENCES FOR WOUTH AFRICA OF PURSUING AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IN DEVIANCE OF THE UN, THE FIVE WESTERN NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN GENERAL. THE LETTER SHOULD DRAW THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA SO THAT VORSTER DOES NOT THINK THAT WESTERN REACTION WOULD BE EQUALLY CAUTIOUS. I WILL BE SEEING BRAND FOURIE AND PIK BOTHA IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO AND ALL FIVE OF US, IF SO AUTHORIZED, WILL CALL ON HIM THURSDAY

MORNING TO PRESENT THE PROPOSALS. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ANOTHER
SOUNDING BEFORE RECOMMENDING THAT A LETTER BE SENT.

7. PLEASE PASS THIS MESSAGE TO ANDY YOUNG AND DON MCHENRY.
BOWDLER

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NNN

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